

Constantine and the Donatists i?7

but also to consider other matters on our own account, and, as we have come from diverse provinces, diverse are the topics on which it seemed good to us to take counsel."

The letter then enumerates the canons to which the signatories had agreed and transmits them with the remark that as the Bishop of Rome's dioceses were wider than those of any other bishop, he was the most suitable person to press the acceptance of these canons upon the Church.

It does not fall within the province of this book to discuss these twenty-two canons; it will suffice to indicate the more important in the briefest outline. The first suggested that Easter should be celebrated on the same day throughout the whole world; the second insisted on the clergy residing in the places to which they were ordained ; the third threatened with excommunication deserters from the army in times of peace (*qui arma prvjiciunt in pace*). Of special importance in connection with the questions raised by the Donatists were the canons which prohibited the rebaptism of heretics if they had been baptised in the name of the Holy Trinity; which recognised the validity of baptism conferred by heretics, if conferred in the proper form ; which ordered that a new bishop should be consecrated by seven, or at least three, bishops and never by a single one; which removed from the ministry all those who were clearly proved to have been *trtiditores* or to have denounced their brother clergy, though, if these had ordained any others to the ministry, the validity of the ordination was not to be challenged, Worthy